

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

REF: CAIRO 18161

FOLLOWING ARE INFORMAL REMARKS TO THE PRESS BY SECRETARY
VANCE AFTER CLOSED TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE, AUGUST 1, 1978:

SENATOR SPARKMAN: LET ME READ A VERY BRIEF STATEMENT.
I'D LIKE TO FURNISH SOME SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR THE
SECRETARY.

OUR COMMITTEE HAS MET WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO GET
HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE
NEGOTIATIONS AND THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS. I THINK THE
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SESSION COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS ONE IN WHICH WE HEARD A
SERIES OF PLUSES AND MINUSES BUT IT'S HARD TO ADD UP THE
SCORE. WE'LL LET THE SECRETARY DO THAT FOR US.

SECRETARY VANCE WAS OPTIMISTIC, AS HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST,
THAT A SALT AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE. THE SOVIETS ARE
MOVING TOWARD OUR POSITIONS ON SOME ISSUES ALTHOUGH WIDE

GAPS ON OTHER ISSUES STILL EXIST. HE SAID THAT THERE IS MEASURED AND STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD A SOUND AGREEMENT, BUT

HE WAS UNABLE TO GIVE US A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST, SECRETARY VANCE REPORTED ON THE SEVERAL ITEMS OF PROGRESS IN THE LEEDS CASTLE TALKS BETWEEN HIM AND THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIANS, BUT HE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD NOT CONTINUE THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL THERE WAS FIRMER INDICATION THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL RETURN ALL ARAB TERRITORIES. THIS PUT WHAT I MIGHT CALL A NEW CAST OVER THE NEGOTIATION SITUATION. SECRETARY VANCE NOTED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN STEPS FORWARD AND STEPS BACKWARD IN RELENT DAYS, BUT HE BELIEVES THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAS NOT RUN ITS FULL COURSE. THAT IS WHY HE IS LEAVING FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE END OF THIS WEEK, ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT AT THIS TIME KNOW IF HIS MISSION WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. SECRETARY VANCE TOLD US THAT HE WILL MEET WITH THE HEADS OF STATE OF ISRAEL AND EGYPT TO DISCUSS WITH THEM FACE TO FACE THE CURRENT SITUATION, AND WILL GET THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT MOVE FORWARD. HE THEN WILL COME BACK TO THE UNITED STATES AND REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT, AND WE EXPECT TO HEAR FROM HIM AGAIN WHEN HE RETURNS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. NOW SECRETARY VANCE IS HERE TO ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS.

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Q. SENATOR SPARKMAN SAID YOU'RE OPTIMISTIC ON SALT BUT HE DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE OPTIMISTIC ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

VANCE: I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE REASON FOR MY TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST AS THE CHAIRMAN INDICATED, IS TO HAVE A CHANCE TO SIT DOWN FACE TO FACE WITH THE TWO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW THE SITUATION AND TO DETERMINE WHAT STEPS MAY BE TAKEN SO AS TO BRING ABOUT A RESUMPTION OF DIRECT FACE TO FACE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH IN OUR JUDGMENT ARE NECESSARY TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. I DON'T WANT TO CHARACTERIZE MY VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO WHAT MAY COME OUT OF THE MEETINGS THAT I WILL BE HAVING WITH THE TWO LEADERS. I KNOW IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO HAVE A CHANCE TO HAVE A FULL AND THOROUGH DISCUSSION WITH THEM ON THIS, AND AS THE CHAIRMAN SAID, I WILL THEN REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT SO THAT WE CAN THEN BETTER DETERMINE OUR COURSE OF ACTION.

Q. DO YOU EXPECT TO CARRY AN AMERICAN PEACE PLAN AT THIS TIME?

VANCE: I DO NOT.

Q. DOES THAT MEAN YOU HAVE DECIDED NOT TO PRESENT SPECIFIC
U.S. PROPOSALS?

VANCE: WHAT WE HAVE SAID ALL ALONG ON THIS IS THAT WE
BELIEVE THERE HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.
WHEN THEY RUN INTO OBSTACLES, WE WILL FEEL OURSELVES FREE
TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO THE PARTIES TO TRY TO OVERCOME
THOSE OBSTACLES AND THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION.

Q. HOW ABOUT SHCHARANSKIY?

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VANCE: I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE MINISTERS' TALKS?

VANCE: OBVIOUSLY, THE FACT THAT THE TALKS HAVE BEEN
BROKEN OFF... THIS IS ONE OF THE ISSUES I'LL BE
DISCUSSING DURING MY TRIP. LET ME MERELY SAY I EXPECT
THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS.

Q. WITH WHOM ARE YOU MORE UPSET: MR. SADAT OR
MR. BEGIN?

VANCE: I THINK I'LL PASS ON THAT.

Q. IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THERE CAN BE A NEW ROUND
OF TALKS AT THE END OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS --

VANCE: EXCUSE ME?

Q. ANY POSSIBILITY THERE COULD BE NEW FACE-TO-FACE
DISCUSSIONS ON THIS PARTICULAR TURF?

VANCE: I DON'T THINK SO.

Q. WILL YOU BE TALKING TO THE SAUDIS THIS TRIP?

VANCE: NO, I WILL BE GOING ONLY TO JERUSALEM AND TO
ALEXANDRIA.

Q. (WHAT ROLE ARE THE SAUDIS PLAYING?) PARAPHRASE

VANCE: I WILL HAVE A BETTER VIEW WITH RESPECT TO THAT
AFTER I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO THE TWO HEADS OF
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GOVERNMENT, AND I INDICATED TO THE COMMITTEE I WOULD REPORT ON THAT.

Q. IF YOU SEE NO PROGRESS FROM THIS TRIP.....?

VANCE: IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT COMES OUT OF THE CONVERSATIONS. I DO NOT EXPECT ANYTHING DRAMATIC OR NEW TO COME OUT OF THE CONVERSATIONS. WE DO EXPECT TO HAVE A MUCH BETTER UNDERSTANDING WHICH I WILL COMMUNICATE TO THE PRESIDENT ON WHERE WE STAND, WHAT THE ISSUES ARE, WHICH WILL HELP US, AND HOPEFULLY THEN, IN WORKING TOWARDS THE MOVING OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

Q. DO YOU CARRY A MESSAGE WITH YOU FROM PRESIDENT CARTER FOR PRESIDENT SADAT AND FOR MR. BEGIN?

VANCE: I WILL GLADLY HAND A MESSAGE TO BOTH OF THEM.

Q. DID YOU GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SENATE WILL BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TOWARD YOUR DRAFT ON A SMALL SPEECH RECOGNIZING SUCH A TREATY?

VANCE: WELL IT'S MUCH TOO EARLY FOR THAT. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ITEMS STILL OPEN, AND I'M SURE THE SENATE IS NOT GOING TO MAKE UP ITS MIND UNTIL WE HAVE A FULL (INAUDIBLE).

Q. COULD YOU TELL US IF YOU FEEL IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE RUSSIANS DID RELEASE OR EXPEL MR. SHCHARANSKIY AT THIS POINT?

VANCE: OBVIOUSLY, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF MR. SHCHARANSKIY WERE RELEASED.

Q. THERE'S BEEN A REPORT TODAY THAT YOU WERE INVOLVED
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IN (PERSUADING SADAT ON TERRITORY CONCESSIONS). COULD YOU COMMENT ON THAT?

VANCE: NO, I'M NOT GOING TO SPECULATE . . . (INAUDIBLE).

Q. (INAUDIBLE)

SENATOR SPARKMAN: THANK YOU VERY MUCH. VANCE

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